

Article - Criminal Law

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§10–617.

(a) In this section, “animal control unit” means the local organization or governmental unit that the appropriate local governmental body designates to house, care for, and control domestic animals of unknown ownership.

(b) An animal control unit shall dispose of an unclaimed dog or cat only by:

- (1) placing the animal in a suitable home;
- (2) retaining the animal in the animal control unit; or
- (3) humanely destroying the animal.

(c) A domestic animal that is impounded by an animal control unit may not be sold, placed, or destroyed until the animal has been carefully inspected for a tag, tattoo, microchip, or other identification to ascertain the owner and:

- (1) 72 hours have elapsed after notice has been given to the owner;
- (2) if the owner cannot be notified, 72 hours have elapsed after the animal is impounded;
- (3) the animal is seriously diseased or severely injured; or
- (4) the animal is under 3 months of age.

(d) (1) An animal control unit shall make a reasonable effort to notify the owner of the location of and the procedure for retrieving an impounded animal.

(2) An owner who retrieves an animal from an animal control unit shall pay all fees, costs, and expenses incurred by the animal control unit.

(3) The necessary expenses for food and attention given to an animal under this section may be collected from the owner, and the animal is not exempt from levy and sale on execution of a judgment for the expenses.

(4) A new owner with whom an animal is placed under subsection (b)(1) of this section may be charged an adoption fee.

(e) A person who violates this section:

(1) for a first offense, is subject to a civil fine not exceeding \$500; and

(2) for a second or subsequent offense, is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$500.

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